

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 ISO-00 L-02 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00

DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01

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FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6306

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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BEIRUT FOR INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORTATION OFFICER

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BTIO, EAIR, BG

SUBJECT: BANGLADESH AIRLINE EXPANSION PLANS

REF: DACCA 1383

1. BANGLADESH BIMAN (BB) SALES PROMOTION OFFICER CALLED AT EMBASSY APRIL 3 TO REQUEST USG FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING TWO BOEING AIRCRAFT DURING NEXT 18 MONTHS.

2. FURTHER TO INFORMATION IN REFTEL, BB OFFICER EXPLAINED THAT BB PRESENT BOEING 707-320-C, BUILT IN 1966, REQUIRED NON-STANDARD PARTS AND HAD PROVED DIFFICULT AND COSTLY TO MAINTAIN. BB HAS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT WITH PANAM. BB NOW RPT NOW SEEKING USG FINANCING FOR THE PURCHASE DURING FY 76 OF A NEW BOEING 707 AND EITHER IN FY 1976 OR THE FOLLOWING FISCAL YEAR ONE BOING 737-200-C. IDEALLY BB WOULD RETURN ITS PRESENT 707 AIRCRAFT TO THE BOEING COMPANY

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IN PART PAYMENT FOR A NEW AIRCRAFT.

3. BB ALSO PLANS TO SELL FOUR OR FIVE OF ITS EIGHT FOKKER FRIENDSHIPS (TWO GIVEN BY INDIA; TWO BY AUSTRALIA; TWO BY NETHERLANDS; AND TWO PURCHASED BY BDG) AND REPLACE THESE WITH SINGLE BOEING 737-22-C. THIS AIRCRAFT WOULD THEN BE USED ON SOME DOMESTIC AND ALL REGIONAL ROUTES: DACCA-BOMBAY-DUBAI AND RETURN; DACCA-BANGKOK-SINGAPORE; DACCA-KATHMANDU; AND DACCA-CALCUTTA.

4. OF BB'S 76 PILOTS AND FIRST OFFICERS, 36 ARE BOEING QUALIFIED, ALTHOUGH SOME OF THESE WOULD REQUIRE ADDITIONAL TRAINING TO OPERATE 737.

5. MAJOR PROBLEMS REMAINS THAT OF FINANCING. WHAT BB SEEKS IS SOME FORM OF USG ASSISTANCE TOWARD THE PURCHASE OF THESE TWO AIRCRAFT WHICH BB ESTIMATES WILL COST ABOUT \$15-20 MILLION INCLUDING "TRADE-IN" OF PRESENT 707. BB WOULD BE WILLING TO CONSIDER THE PURCHASE OF USE AIRCRAFT, SALES OFFICER SAID.

6. COMMENT. WE WOULD HOPE THAT SOME USG FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE COULD BE FOUND TO ENABLE BB TO EXPAND ITS SERVICE WITH U.S. AIRCRAFT. THIS IS ONE OF THE FEW BDG-OPERATED ENTERPRISES WHICH IS DOING REASONABLE WELL IN THE FACE OF DIRECT INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION. (NOTE: NONE OF THE BB ROUTES CONTEMPLATED ARE SERVED AT PRESENT, AS FAR AS WE KNOW, BY U.S. AIRLINES.)

7. PLEASE LET US HAVE YOUR ASSESSMENT OF POSSIBLE USG FINANCING FOR THESE SALES.
CHESLAW

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